

<b>POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT</b>		<b>RULES AND REGULATIONS</b>	
<b>SUBJECT: Ride-Alongs</b>		<b>NUMBER: 1-14</b>	
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999</b>		<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	
<b>AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: RR 1-14, January 1988</b>		<b>APPROVED: _____ Chief of Police/Sheriff</b>	
<b>CALEA STANDARDS: None</b>		<b>VLEPSC STANDARDS: None</b>	

## **NOTE**

This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

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## **INDEX WORDS**

Citizen observer  
Ride-along

## **I. POLICY**

The Ride-Along program allows citizens to voluntarily accompany officers and to observe law-enforcement activities to better understand the problems of policing. The observer may request to ride in any area at any time or with a particular officer. If convenient to the department and conditions permit, permission may be granted. The department's community-oriented policing goals include a commitment to work with the community to solve neighborhood problems and to operate an open, accessible, accountable agency. The Ride-Along program is consistent with these goals. Safety of law-enforcement personnel shall be the primary concern.

## **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this general order is to establish procedures for the Ride-Along program.

## **III. PROCEDURES**

### **A. Ride-Along request**

1. Persons wishing to ride with an officer shall pick up Ride-Along forms at the police department/sheriff's office or at the town manager's office during

business hours. Completed request forms (page 1-14.5) and liability waivers (page 1-14.6) must be returned at least five working days before the desired Ride-Along date. The forms referred to herein are found at the end of this order.

2. The chief of police/sheriff shall grant permission for citizens to ride with officers. A records check shall be performed on any applicant for Ride-Along.

B. Limitations

1. A person shall not ride unless approval has been granted and the chief/sheriff has the properly-completed waiver. Approval will be for one specific eight-hour period unless special limitations or extensions are granted by the chief/sheriff.
2. Spouses of sworn personnel may participate in the Ride-Along program. If the chief/sheriff approves, the spouse may accompany husband/wife for a limited period of time.
3. Normally, no more than one observer shall accompany an officer at a time.
4. Juveniles must be 16 years of age or older to ride and must have request and waiver forms signed by parent or guardian.
5. No one shall be allowed to observe law-enforcement activities relating to raids or ride with plain clothes units without specific, advance coordination and approval of the chief/sheriff.

C. Beginning tour

1. If no specific officer is requested by name by the observer, the on-duty supervisor shall appoint the host officer.
2. Before the ride, the on-duty supervisor shall provide an observer's comment form to the observer and ask that the form be completed and turned in at the end of the ride. The host officer will be provided a Ride-Along report and shall complete and turn in the form at the end of the ride.
3. The observer should be appropriately dressed in either business attire or casual wear in good taste; if not, Ride-Along approval may be cancelled by the on-duty supervisor.
4. The host officer shall instruct the observer on the following procedures:
  - a. Follow the officer's directions.

- b. Appearance in court as a witness may be necessary.
- c. The observer may end the ride whenever he or she wishes.
- d. The officer may end the ride if safety circumstances dictate.
- e. The observer must wear a seat belt and shoulder strap when riding in the vehicle.
- f. Observers shall identify themselves, if asked, as an authorized citizen observer or Ride-Along.
- g. Observers shall not be permitted to carry any flashlight, camera, radio of any type, tape recorder or player, binoculars unless authorized by the chief/sheriff. Observers shall not carry weapons or restraining devices of any kind. Exceptions may be granted to law-enforcement personnel.
- h. Observers shall not smoke during the Ride-Along.

D. Observer conduct

- 1. Observers shall at all times remain under the complete control of the assigned officer and shall comply with all directions and requests.
- 2. Observers shall not interfere with investigations in any way by conversing with victims, suspects, or witnesses, handling evidence or equipment, or participating in any enforcement activity unless directed to do so by the host officer per *Virginia Code* § 18.2-463 (refusal to aid an officer in the execution of his office).

E. Arrests, transporting, booking

- 1. If the host officer feels that there are no hazards involved, the observer may accompany the officer while transporting or booking prisoners. If the officer believes a problem may arise, the observer should be temporarily transferred to another officer or returned to the point of origin.
- 2. Observers shall not be permitted to remain with prisoners in the absence of officers.

F. Ending tour

Upon completion of the ride, the officer will return the observer to the department and thank him (or her) for his (or her) interest. The officer will ask the observer to

complete the observer's comment form. Completed observer forms shall be forwarded to the chief/sheriff for review, then filed.

G. Prohibited activities

At **no time** shall an officer, while accompanied by an observer, engage in emergency or pursuit driving, respond to a crime-in-progress reportedly involving violence, or perform a felony vehicle stop. If officers must perform these activities, then they must deposit observers at a safe location.

***CITIZEN RIDE-ALONG REQUEST***

Dear Sir:

I would like to ride along on \_\_\_\_\_, accompanying  
(date)  
Officer \_\_\_\_\_ for the following reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I have read and signed the release form and I understand the provisions.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_ BEST TIME/DAY TO CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE SIGNED

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN (if rider is juvenile)

FROM: CHIEF OF POLICE/SHERIFF

TO: OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION

REQUEST IS APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DISAPPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

OBSERVER AUTHORIZED TO RIDE \_\_\_\_\_ ON \_\_\_\_\_ IN  
(hours) (date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(area) WITH OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_.

## **RELEASE AND WAIVER**

KNOW BY ALL THESE PRESENT, that I \_\_\_\_\_, on my own behalf and on behalf of my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, estate, agents and assigns, and representatives of any nature whatsoever, for and in consideration of the authorization and permission to accompany officers or any officer of the department during the course of their or his duties, which has been granted to me at my voluntary request, after having been fully advised of the potential hazards of such activity or activities, do hereby WAIVE AND RELEASE all demands, damages, actions, causes of action, suits and claims of any nature whatsoever, whether in law or in equity, that I or my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, estate, agents and assigns, and representatives of any nature whatsoever might otherwise have against the town/county, the department, and each and every officer, official, member, employee, agent and attorney thereof and therefore, and his or her heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, and estate, on account of my death or injuries, both to person and to property, whether foreseeable or not, which may occur, directly or indirectly, or develop at anytime in the future as a result of my activities or association with the department, whether in a vehicle, in the station, or otherwise in association with the department and officers and officials thereof in any manner whatsoever.

It is expressly agreed and understood that this RELEASE AND WAIVER shall apply for the express purpose of precluding forever all claims, suits, demands, damages, and causes of action that I or my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, estate, agents and assigns and representatives of any nature whatsoever might otherwise assert against any of the aforesaid parties as a result of my association and activities with the department during:\_\_\_\_\_.

I hereby declare that the terms of this RELEASE AND WAIVER have been fully read and understood by me, and freely and voluntarily entered into and accepted by me, and I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of this agreement.

In further consideration of the aforesaid authorization and permission granted to me to accompany an officer or officers of the department at my own request, I hereby promise and agree to fully comply with all instructions given to me for the purpose of protecting my personal safety and that of my property.

This waiver must be approved by the chief of police/sheriff:

\_\_\_\_\_ (CHIEF/SHERIFF)

\_\_\_\_\_ (APPLICANT)  
Parent/Guardian (If Signee Is A Juvenile)

\_\_\_\_\_ (WITNESS)

This RELEASE AND WAIVER is not valid until notarized.